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FOR EUR/RUS KATE SZPILA

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON POSSIBLE RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF
ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: STATE 90978

(SBU) On August 25, the DCM met with MFA Director General Nguyen Ba Hung to register U.S. concerns about possible Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and to urge Vietnam to press Russia not to take such a step (reftel). Hung took note of the U.S. position and promised to relay the substance of the demarche to his superiors. In a follow-up discussion August 26, Phan Ho The Nam of the MFA's Department of International Affairs emphasized that Vietnam has encouraged all sides of the conflict to continue discussions. Noting that the Russian government has yet to act on the recommendation of the Russian Duma and Federation Council, Nam expressed hope that the situation would stabilize with the withdrawal of Russian forces. When pressed, Nam acknowledged the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity as general principles, but declined to characterize Vietnam's position on Russia's possible recognition of the separatist regions.

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